

Amendments to the Specification:

The title has been replaced with:

5 ~~HOLDER FOR FLEXIBLE HEART VALVE~~ AND ASSOCIATED CONNECTING
BAND

The “Related Applications” section on page 1 has been replaced with:

10 The present application is a continuation of Serial No. 09/847,930, filed May 3, 2001,
entitled HOLDER FOR FLEXIBLE HEART VALVE, which is a continuation-in-part of U.S.
application Serial No. 09/332,759, filed June 14, 1999, entitled FLEXIBLE HEART VALVE,
now U.S. Patent No. 6,558,418, which claims priority under 35 U.S.C §119(e) to provisional
15 application No. 60/117,445, filed on January 26, 1999, the disclosures of which are expressly
incorporated herein by reference.

The following paragraph has been added on page 38:

20 [0167] A holder for a highly flexible tissue-type heart valve is disclosed that maintains an
implant shape to the valve. The holder may have cusp and commissure contacting supports, and
may be attached at all six such supports, or only three. The holder may be flexible to permit
inward flexing of the heart valve during implant for greater visibility when implanting using a
running suture method. The holder may be formed of flexible wires such as Nitinol, and shaped
25 to resist excessive axial and torsional deformation of the valve. A short handle connector
suitable for manual grasping may be attached and stored with the valve, with the handle
connector having a coupling for receiving a longer delivery handle. A two stage holder may be
utilized to accommodate different implant methods.